MARVEL
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LGY#254
PERCY • WACHTER • VALENZA
GHOST RIDER
50 YEARS

When innocent blood is spilled, a ***Spirit of Vengeance*** is born, and **JOHNNY BLAZE** finds himself transformed!

Marvel Comics presents...

GHOST RIDER

"Nowhere Man"

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guest artist

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VC's TRAVIS LANHAM
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DARREN SHAN *editor*
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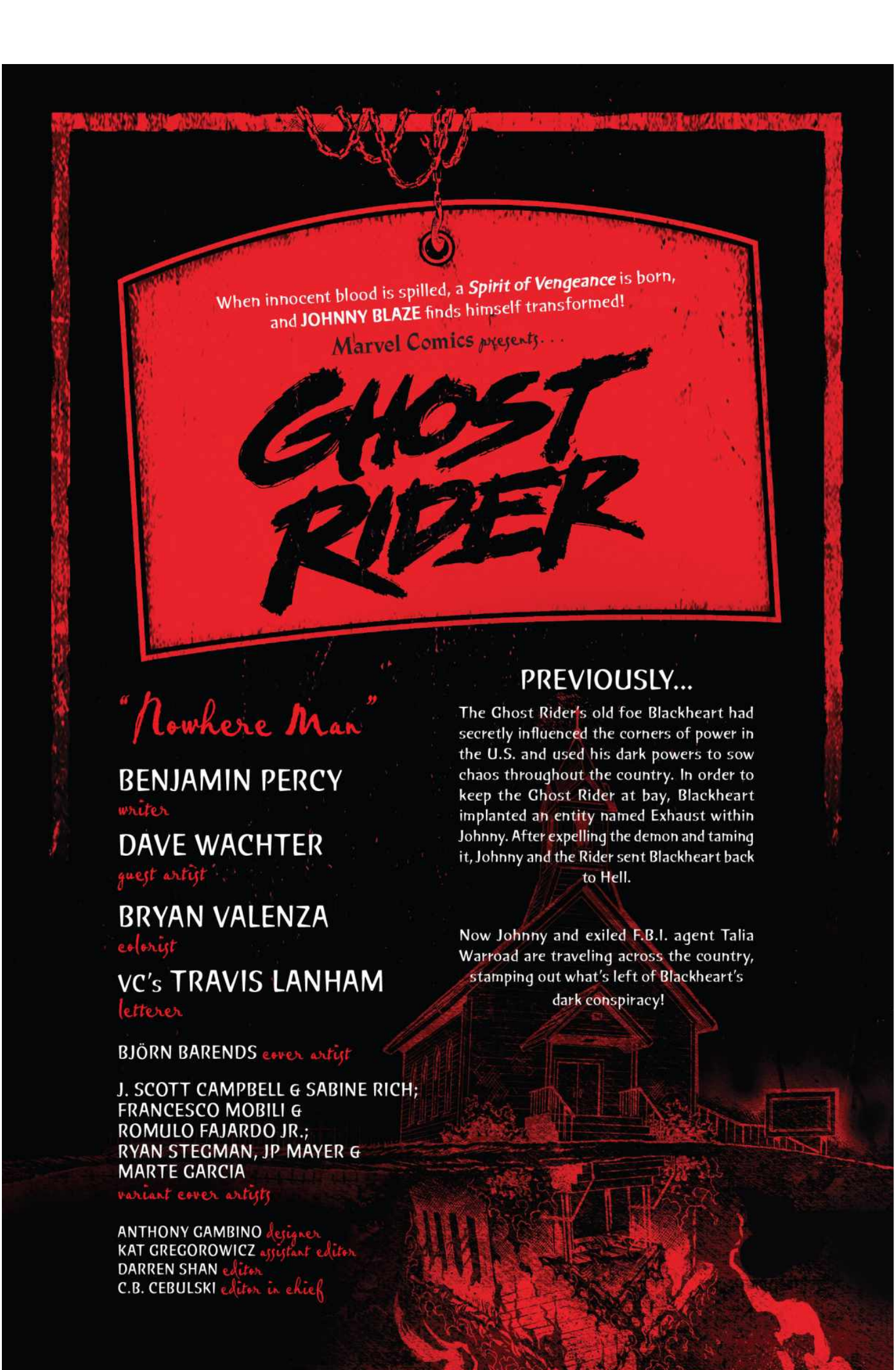
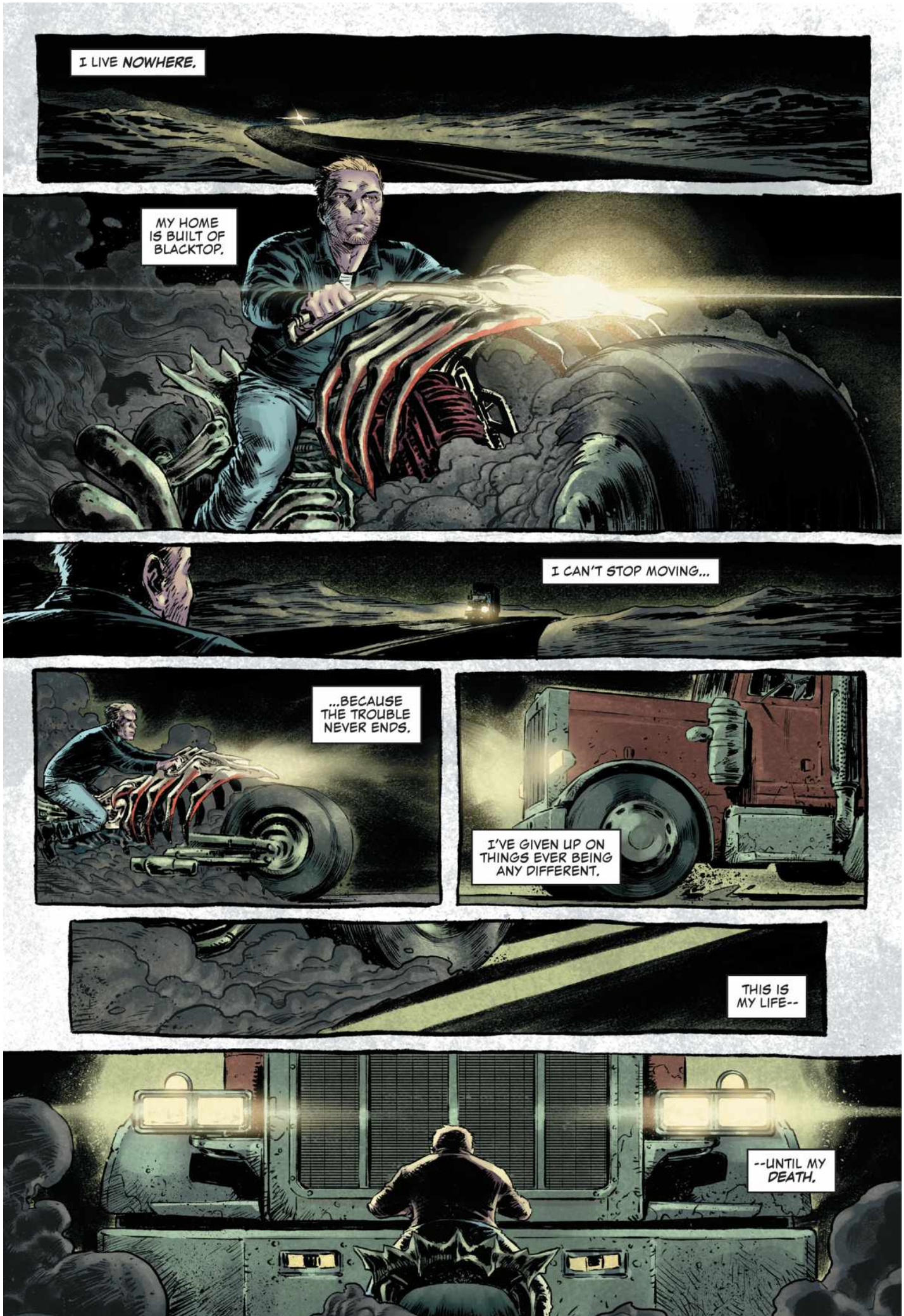
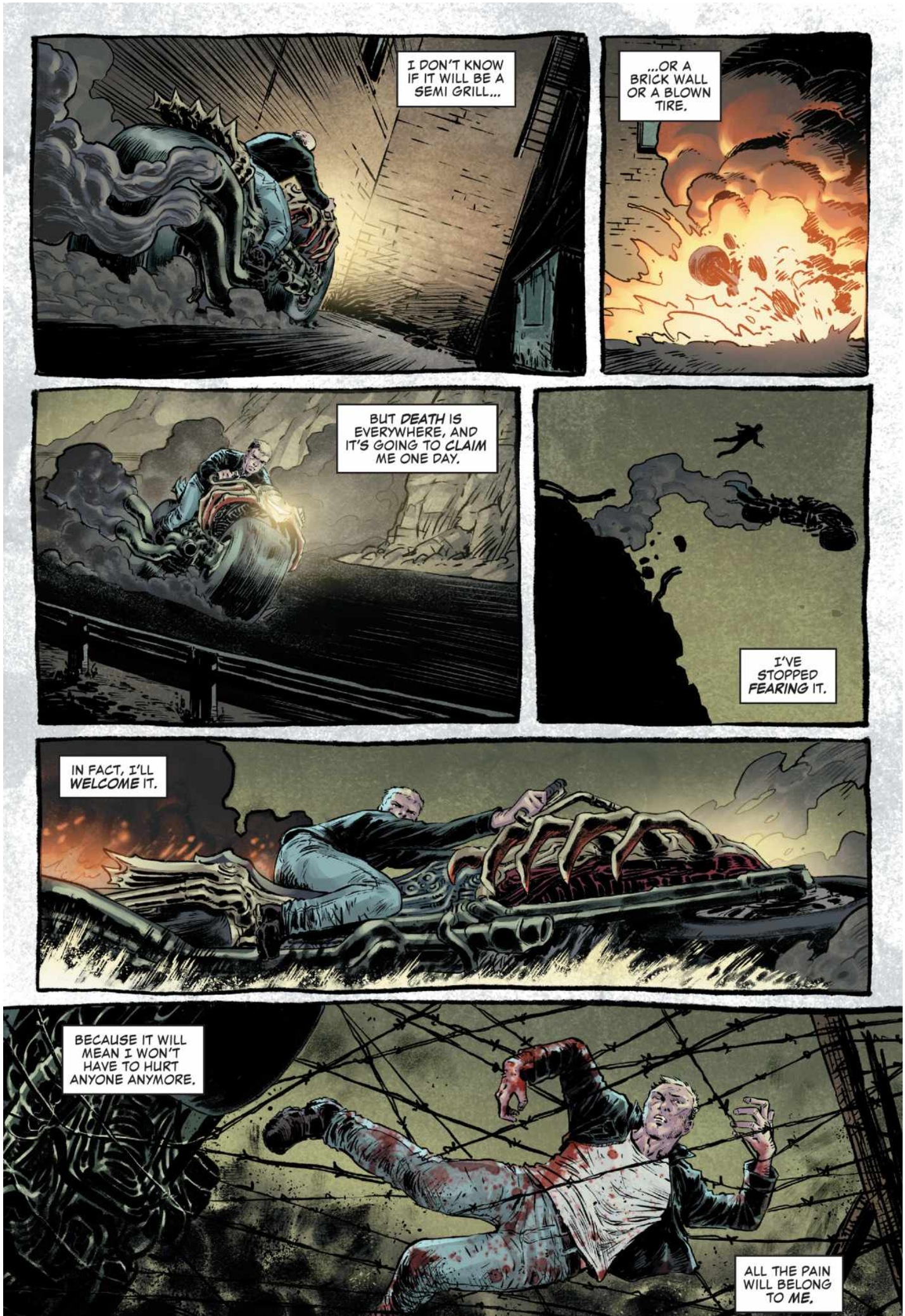
PREVIOUSLY...

The Ghost Rider's old foe Blackheart had secretly influenced the corners of power in the U.S. and used his dark powers to sow chaos throughout the country. In order to keep the Ghost Rider at bay, Blackheart implanted an entity named Exhaust within Johnny. After expelling the demon and taming it, Johnny and the Rider sent Blackheart back to Hell.

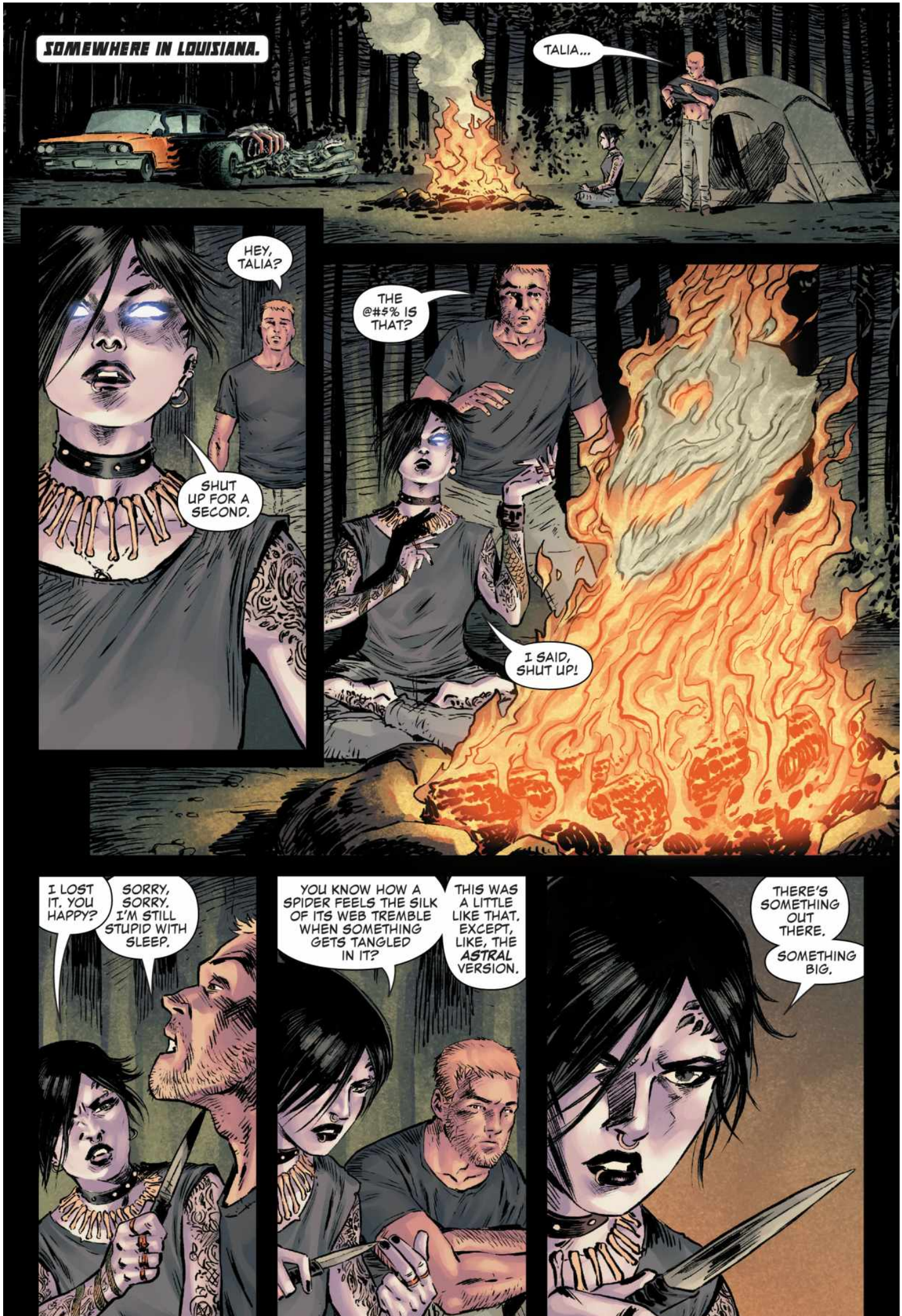
Now Johnny and exiled F.B.I. agent Talia Warroad are traveling across the country, stamping out what's left of Blackheart's dark conspiracy!



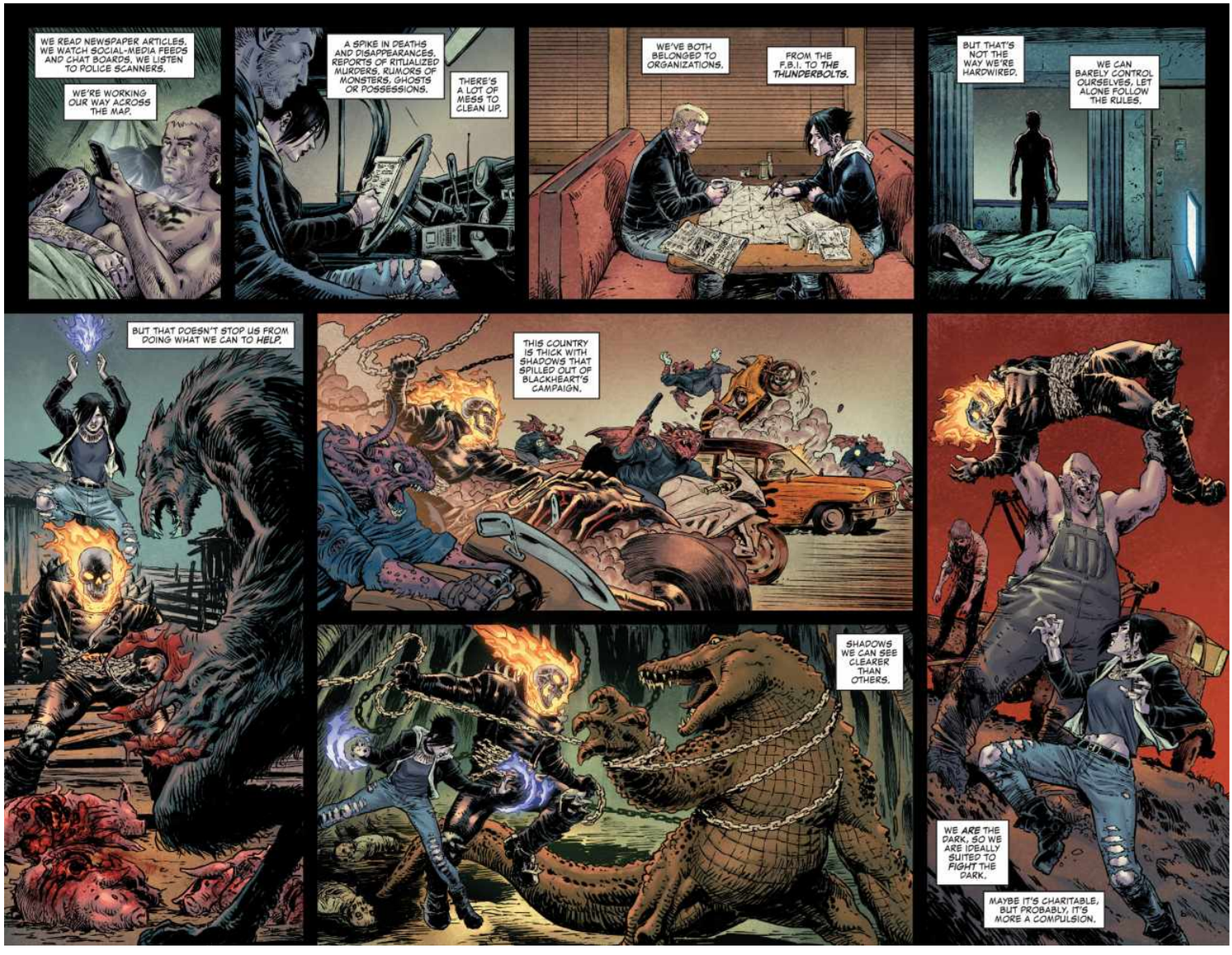

I LIVE NOWHERE.
MY HOME IS BUILT OF BLACKTOP.
I CAN'T STOP MOVING...
...BECAUSE THE TROUBLE NEVER ENDS.
I'VE GIVEN UP ON THINGS EVER BEING ANY DIFFERENT.
THIS IS MY LIFE--
--UNTIL MY DEATH.


I DON'T KNOW IF IT WILL BE A SEMI GRILL...
...OR A BRICK WALL OR A BLOWN TIRE.
BUT DEATH IS EVERYWHERE, AND IT'S GOING TO CLAIM ME ONE DAY.
I'VE STOPPED FEARING IT.
IN FACT, I'LL WELCOME IT.
BECAUSE IT WILL MEAN I WON'T HAVE TO HURT ANYONE ANYMORE.
ALL THE PAIN WILL BELONG TO ME.

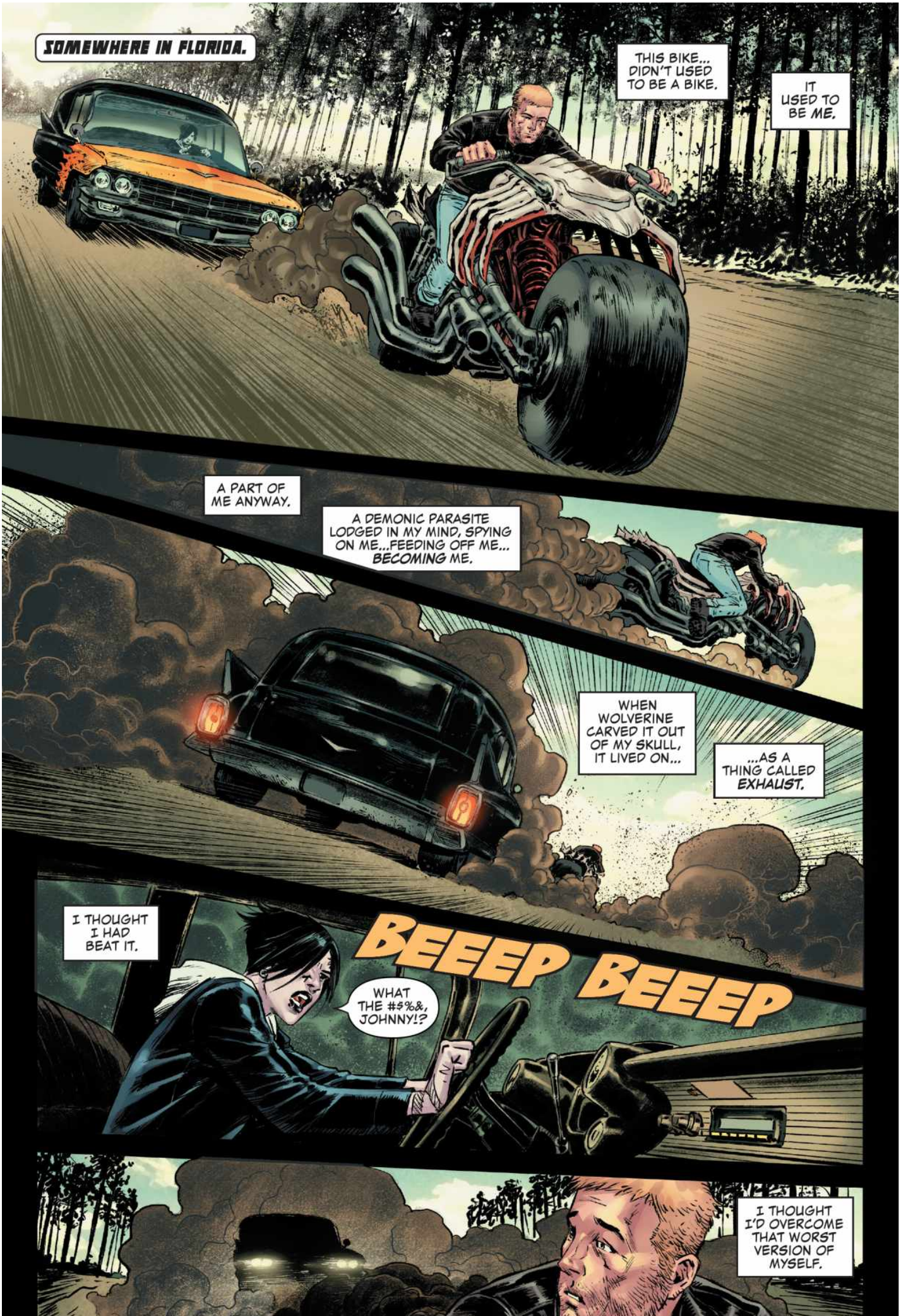
THESE DAYS, THE ONLY THING THAT SCARES ME...
...IS HOW MANY I'LL DESTROY BEFORE IT'S TIME FOR ME TO GO.
BECAUSE I'M ALWAYS ONE GEAR-SHIFT AWAY FROM DOING TERRIBLE, TERRIBLE THINGS.
IT'S NO SURPRISE MY SLEEP IS PLAGUED BY NIGHTMARES...
:GASP:
...SINCE I'M ALREADY LIVING A NIGHTMARE.
BUT AT LEAST I'M NOT ALONE IN THE DARKNESS ANYMORE.


SOMEWHERE IN LOUISIANA.
TALIA...
HEY, TALIA?
SHUT UP FOR A SECOND.
THE @#$% IS THAT?
I SAID, SHUT UP!
I LOST IT. YOU HAPPY?
SORRY, SORRY. I'M STILL STUPID WITH SLEEP.
YOU KNOW HOW A SPIDER FEELS THE SILK OF ITS WEB TREMBLE WHEN SOMETHING GETS TANGLED IN IT?
THIS WAS A LITTLE LIKE THAT. EXCEPT, LIKE, THE ASTRAL VERSION.
THERE'S SOMETHING OUT THERE.
SOMETHING BIG.

NIGHTMARES AGAIN?
YEAH...
BAD ONES.
I CAN'T MAKE THEM GO AWAY.
BUT I CAN PUT OFF YOU GOING TO SLEEP A LITTLE LONGER.
YEAH. OKAY.
I--OW-- LIKE THE SOUND OF THAT.
AND, TALIA--
DON'T EVEN THINK ABOUT SAYING SOMETHING SWEET OR I'LL PUKE IN YOUR MOUTH.

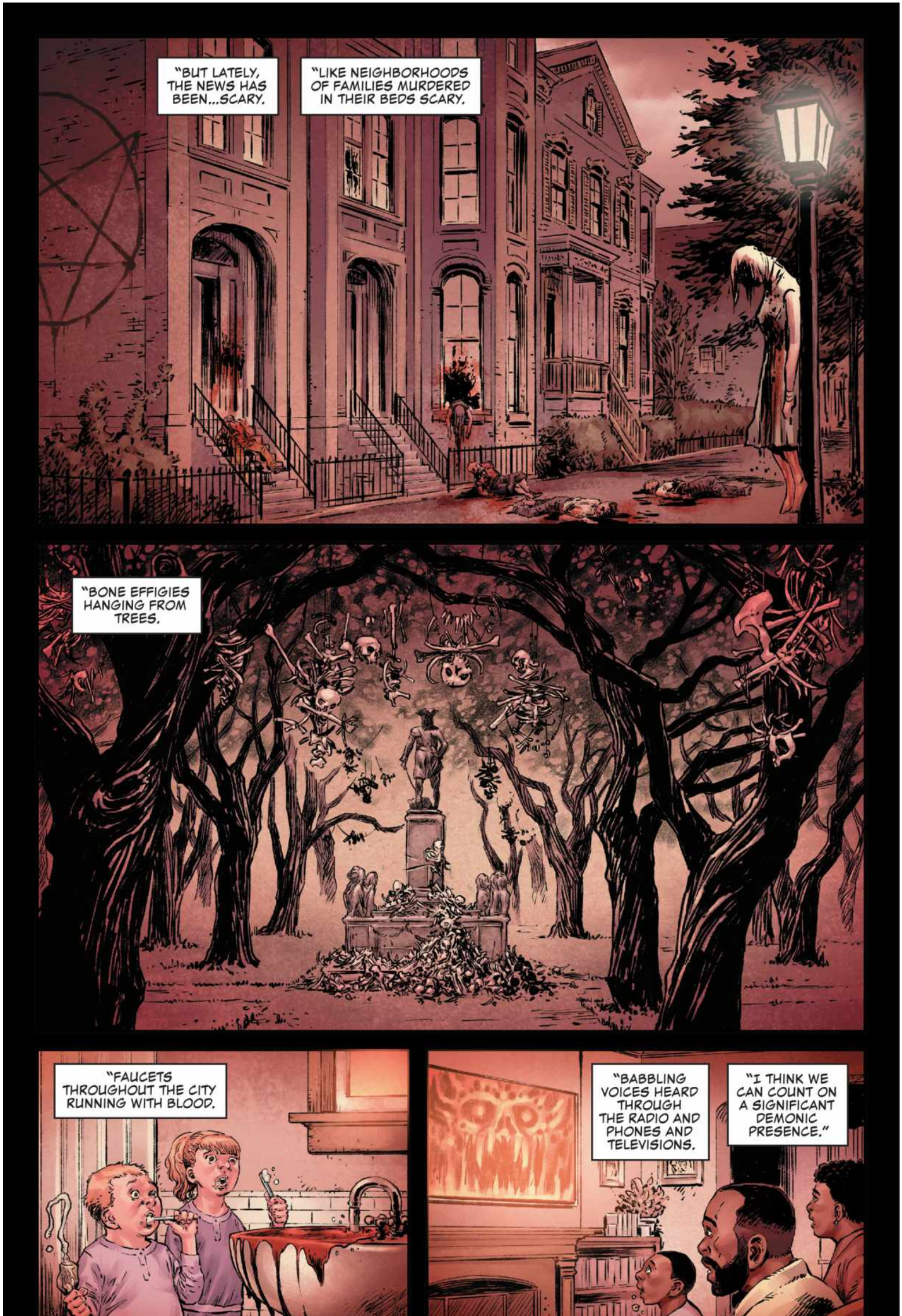

WE READ NEWSPAPER ARTICLES, WE WATCH SOCIAL-MEDIA FEEDS AND CHAT BOARDS, WE LISTEN TO POLICE SCANNERS.
WE'RE WORKING OUR WAY ACROSS THE MAP.
A SPIKE IN DEATHS AND DISAPPEARANCES. REPORTS OF RITUALIZED MURDERS, RUMORS OF MONSTERS, GHOSTS OR POSSESSIONS.
THERE'S A LOT OF MESS TO CLEAN UP.
WE'VE BOTH BELONGED TO ORGANIZATIONS.
FROM THE F.B.I. TO *THE THUNDERBOLTS*.
BUT THAT'S NOT THE WAY WE'RE HARDWIRED.
WE CAN BARELY CONTROL OURSELVES, LET ALONE FOLLOW THE RULES.
BUT THAT DOESN'T STOP US FROM DOING WHAT WE CAN TO *HELP*.
THIS COUNTRY IS THICK WITH SHADOWS THAT SPILLED OUT OF BLACKHEART'S CAMPAIGN.
SHADOWS WE CAN SEE CLEARER THAN OTHERS.
WE *ARE* THE DARK, SO WE ARE IDEALLY SUITED TO *FIGHT* THE DARK.
MAYBE IT'S CHARITABLE, BUT PROBABLY, IT'S MORE A COMPULSION.

SOMEWHERE IN ALABAMA.
DILL'S
ICE
HEY, MAN.
Sorry WE'RE OPEN
WHAT KIND OF BIKE IS THIS ANYWAY?
DON'T TOUCH IT.
KIND OF A RUDE WAY TO ANSWER A FRIENDLY QUESTION.
I'M JUST CURIOUS IS ALL.
SHE SURE LOOKS LIKE--
--THE DEVIL!
SKUNCH
AIIIEEEE!
I TOLD HIM NOT TO TOUCH IT.
I DON'T LIKE THAT THING, JOHNNY.


SOMEWHERE IN FLORIDA.
THIS BIKE... DIDN'T USED TO BE A BIKE.
IT USED TO BE ME.
A PART OF ME ANYWAY.
A DEMONIC PARASITE LODGED IN MY MIND, SPYING ON ME...FEEDING OFF ME... BECOMING ME.
WHEN WOLVERINE CARVED IT OUT OF MY SKULL, IT LIVED ON...
...AS A THING CALLED EXHAUST.
I THOUGHT I HAD BEAT IT.
BEEEP BEEEP
WHAT THE #$%&, JOHNNY!?
I THOUGHT I'D OVERCOME THAT WORST VERSION OF MYSELF.

BUT I'M OBVIOUSLY STRUGGLING TO MAINTAIN CONTROL OVER ANYTHING IN MY LIFE.
@#$%!
VROOOOOM
SCREEEEE
YOU REALIZE WHAT'S HAPPENING, DON'T YOU?
IT WANTS YOU FOR ITSELF.
YOU NEED TO GET RID OF THAT #$%& THING!

SOMEWHERE IN GEORGIA.
BUT THERE'S A PART OF ME THAT DOESN'T WANT TO LET GO.
I KNEW A CARNIE WHO KEPT A TUMOR THE DOCTORS PULLED OUT OF HIM IN A GLASS BOTTLE OF FORMALDEHYDE.
I KNEW A SOLDIER WHO KEPT THE BULLET THAT WAS LODGED IN HIS LUNG.
EAT
I KNEW A DRUNK DRIVER WHO KEPT A PHOTO OF THE FAMILY HE KILLED INSIDE HIS LIQUOR CABINET.
SOMETIMES, IT'S GOOD TO KEEP THE UGLINESS CLOSE, SO WE CAN APPRECIATE HOW FAR WE'VE COME...
...AS LONG AS IT DOESN'T OVERWHELM US.
HEY.
YOU HEAR A WORD I SAID?
SORRY. I WAS SOMEPLACE ELSE.
BLACKHEART MADE A MESS OF THIS COUNTRY, AND WE'VE BEEN DOING A LOT OF CLEANUP LATELY. SUPERNATURAL @#$% MAID SERVICE.
NOW WE'RE ONLY A FEW HOURS AWAY FROM SAVANNAH...
...AND WE'VE KNOWN FOR A WHILE NOW THAT THIS PLACE IS GOING TO BE HOT.
IT'S ALREADY KNOWN AS THE MOST HAUNTED CITY IN AMERICA.
Savannah


"BUT LATELY, THE NEWS HAS BEEN...SCARY.
"LIKE NEIGHBORHOODS OF FAMILIES MURDERED IN THEIR BEDS SCARY.
"BONE EFFIGIES HANGING FROM TREES.
"FAUCETS THROUGHOUT THE CITY RUNNING WITH BLOOD.
"BABBLING VOICES HEARD THROUGH THE RADIO AND PHONES AND TELEVISIONS.
"I THINK WE CAN COUNT ON A SIGNIFICANT DEMONIC PRESENCE."

ON THAT NOTE, THERE'S A HARDWARE STORE ACROSS THE STREET. I'M GOING TO STOCK UP ON SOME GEAR. WE NEED TO ARMOR UP.
I'LL FINISH UP HERE AND GET THE CHECK.
EMMETT'S HARDWARE
WHERE THE #$%& DID...?
VREEEE
HNNGH!

WHEN YOU SURROUND YOURSELF WITH MONSTERS...
...IT'S EASY TO BECOME ONE.
RUM RUM RUM
RUM REEEEEE
WHEN YOU SPEND YOUR LIFE JUDGING OTHERS...
...IT'S EASY TO IGNORE YOUR OWN FAILINGS.
I'VE BEEN CLINGING TO THIS THING, DRAGGING IT ALONG WITH US...
KRAAAOOOM
...EVEN THOUGH I KNEW IT WAS

IF THE RIDER CONTROLS ME...
...I THINK I WANTED SOMETHING I IN TURN COULD CONTROL.
SOMETHING THAT FELT LIKE AN EXTERNALIZATION OF ALL THE RAGE AND GRIEF AND DOUBT I STRUGGLE WITH.
ROAD CLOSED
I COULD WEAPONIZE IT AGAINST OTHERS.
BUT INSTEAD...
...I'M JUST ENDANGERING MYSELF...

...AND THE ONLY OTHER PERSON WHO SEEMS TO GIVE A $#%& ABOUT ME.
KROOONCH
I NEED TO TRY HARDER NOT TO BE A MONSTER...
...EVEN IF I'LL NEVER BE A HERO.
UFF!

KRRAAAKL
THAT'S FOR SAVING MY ASS.
GAA--!
AND THAT'S FOR ALMOST KILLING ME.

I LIVE NOWHERE.
WHEN YOU LIVE NOWHERE, YOU STILL NEED SOMETHING TO MAKE YOU FEEL CENTERED.
SHRRRUK
THAT'S WHY SOME LONG-HAUL TRUCKERS ALWAYS PARK AT THE SAME REST STOPS, ORDER THE SAME BURGER AND PIE OFF THE MENU.
I'VE GOT A PLACE I GO WHEN I'M FEELING JITTERY AND CAN'T SLEEP.
IT'S MY GRAVE. A GRAVE IN MY HEAD. THE GRAVE WHERE I'LL ONE DAY BE BURIED.
"JOHNNY BLAZE," THE STONE READS.
KRUNKA
DEEP DOWN, IN THE DARK, I'M TUCKED AWAY.
THE SILENCE IS PROFOUND.
NOBODY IS SCREAMING AT ME IN PAIN OR ANGER.
I'M FINALLY AT PEACE.
I'M FINALLY HOME.

EVEN IF I'M NOT THERE YET, AT LEAST AN UGLY PART OF ME IS BURIED.
A ROAD--A FITTING TOMB--WILL BE PAVED OVER EXHAUST.
HAYDEN'S FALLS IS JUST A BAD MEMORY IN THE REARVIEW.
I'M MOVING ON, READY FOR WHAT'S NEXT.
WE'RE TEN MINUTES OUT FROM SAVANNAH.
AND I CAN'T GET A RADIO STATION OR CELL SIGNAL.
SHHHHH
WHEN WE STUDIED THE PATTERN OF SUPERNATURAL ACTIVITY, WHEN WE PINNED ALL THE NEWS STORIES AND POLICE REPORTS ON THE MAP...
...SAVANNAH WAS ONE OF THE PEAKS OF THE PENTAGRAM DESIGN.
WE KNEW IT WAS GOING TO BE BAD.
BUT THIS...

...THIS LOOKS APOCALYPTIC.

NEXT ISSUE

BLOOD BROTHERS

Danny Ketch is back--as this new, highway-melting chapter of GHOST RIDER kicks into gear--so get ready for one HELL of a reunion. Both he and Johnny have changed significantly, and they'll hardly recognize one another as their paths converge to war!

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